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HOUGHTON MIFFLIN

Vocabulary Readers

Team Players



by Adam McClellan

Number of Words: 555

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Team Players



by Adam McClellan



Strategy Focus

As you read, think of **questions** about what makes a good team player. See if you can find the answers in the text.



HOUGHTON MIFFLIN

BOSTON

Key Vocabulary

attention careful observing or listening

awkward uncomfortable

bragged boasted

briskly quickly, energetically

conversation talk between two or more people

encourage give support or confidence

managed succeeded in doing something

notice become aware of

Word Teaser

When my teammate _____,
I walked briskly away.
He praises himself every hour
of the day!

When you play team sports, even the best player can't win the game alone. Everyone needs to be a team player.

Team players are easy to recognize. They work hard. They work well with others and **encourage** their teammates to do their best. And they keep their mind on the game, not on themselves.



Working Hard

Working hard means giving all of your energy to a game. Even if you're tired, you keep moving. Most of all, you don't give up, even if your team is losing.



Working hard begins with practice. You might feel awkward or uncomfortable trying out certain skills at first. Don't give up. Keep practicing, and you are sure to improve. If you're already good at something, work to make yourself even better.



Football star Tom Brady knows the importance of hard work. He has won three championships as quarterback of the New England Patriots. Brady spends long hours in the weight room getting stronger. He studies other teams carefully to learn their strong points and weak points. When game time comes, Brady is prepared. He gives everything he can to help his team win. His teammates **notice** how hard he works. It makes them want to work harder, too!



Working With Others

Working with others means putting your team first. You don't worry about looking good or showing off your skills. You think about your teammates and how you can help them win.



The U.S. Women's soccer team knows a lot about teamwork. In the gold medal game of the 2004 Olympics, they played against a younger and faster team from Brazil. For most of the game, the team from Brazil played better than the U.S. team. But instead of getting upset, the U.S. team members tried harder to work as a team. Soon, they scored a goal.



The score was tied for a while. Finally, a member of the U.S. team, Abby Wambach, **managed** to score a goal. Her team won the gold medal!

Reporters swarmed around Wambach for a **conversation** about the game. Wambach could have **bragged** about what she had done. Instead, she talked about her teammates. “It’s not about me,” she said. “It’s about them.”

The U.S. Women’s soccer team at the 2004 Olympics.



Keeping Your Mind on the Game

Team players also keep their mind on the game. They pay **attention** and think about what's going on. Basketball hero Bill Russell knew how important it was to stay focused. During his career, his teams won an amazing eleven championships! They couldn't have done it without Russell's smart playing and teamwork.



Russell thought carefully about every move he made. Of course, he thought quickly, too! For example, Russell was skilled at tipping the basketball out of a player's hands so the other team couldn't score. He learned to tip the ball over to one of his teammates instead of just swatting it into the seats. That way, the teammate could run **briskly** up the court and try to score some points.

Russell's approach helped his team, but it also helped him. By the end of his career, he wasn't just playing for his team—he was coaching it, too!

As you can see, being a team player can bring you a lot of success. But even better, it can bring you the respect of your teammates. And that's every bit as good as winning the game!



Responding

Putting Words to Work

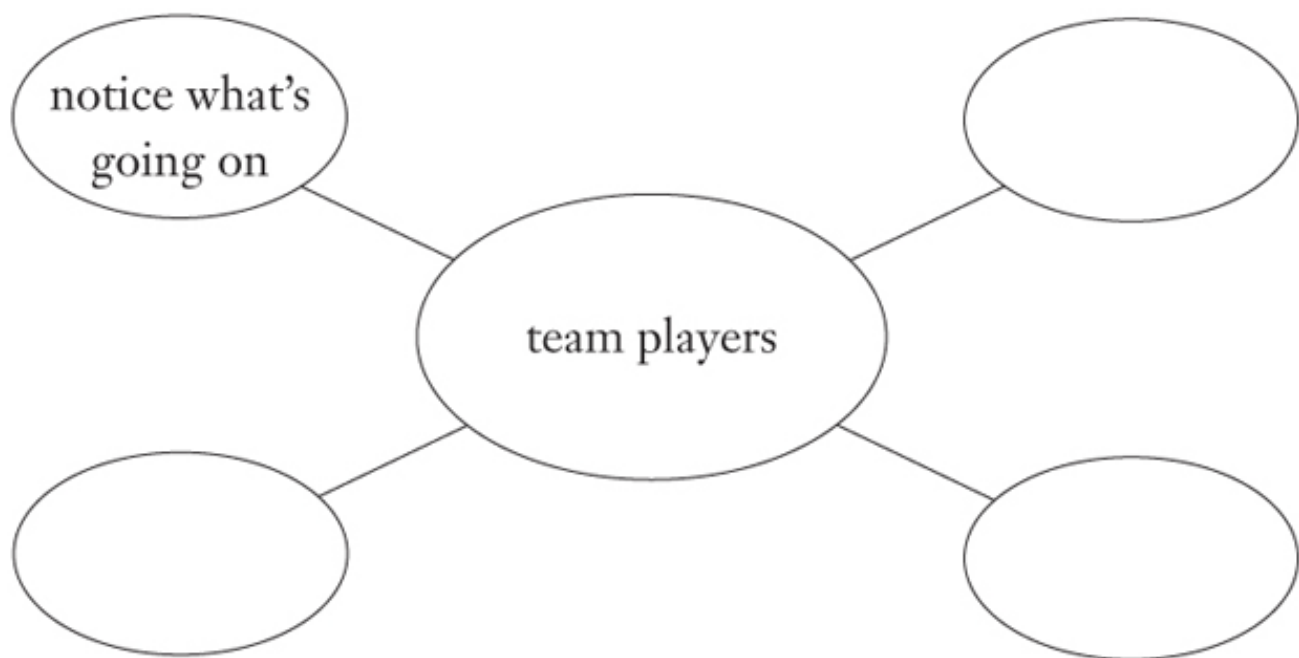
1. If you could have a **conversation** with one of the athletes described in this selection, what question would you ask?
2. Why would someone who **bragged** a lot be a poor team player? Explain your answer.
3. Complete the following sentence:
Near the end of the game, I forgot to pay **attention** and _____.
4. What is the first thing the author **encourages** team players to do?
5. **PARTNER ACTIVITY:** Think of a word you learned in the text. Explain its meaning to your partner and give an example.

Answer to Word Teaser

bragged

Word Builder

Good team players always **notice** what's going on in a game. What else makes a good team player? Copy this word web. Add words or phrases that describe a team player.



Write About It

Imagine that you're a player on a sports team. Write a paragraph that describes things you can do to get your team to work together. Use at least two words or phrases from your word web.

Key Vocabulary

attention
awkward
bragged
briskly
conversation
encourage
managed
notice

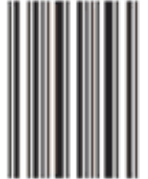
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